

CLAIMS:

1. A method for controlling transfer of data between a service provider and a user in a communication system where the service provider possesses a privacy policy, the method comprising the steps of:

introducing to a broker a usage policy for constraints related to data of a user;

receiving a request for data associated with the user from a service provider to the broker;

checking, in the broker, the request against a usage policy of the user, and

deciding if the data can be released.

2. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of using the user to define the usage policy for the constraints related to the data.

3. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a predefined set of privacy policies and usage policies.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the providing step comprises providing the privacy policies and the usage policies comprising similar information elements.

5. A method according to claim 3, wherein the providing step comprises providing at least one of the privacy policies and at least one of the usage policies which specify a strictness level describing the constraints related to the data.

6. A method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of using the user to choose the usage policies for the constraints related to the data.

7. A method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of releasing user data if the at least one of the privacy policies of the service provider matches with the specified strictness level of the at least one of the usage policies of the user.

8. A method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of indicating, by the broker, the strictness level of the at least one of the usage policies of the user to the service provider if the at least one of the privacy policies of the service provider does not match with the specified strictness level of the at least one of the usage policies of the user.

9. A method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of allowing the user to reduce a usage policy requirement if the at least one of the privacy policies of the service provider does not match with the specified strictness level of the at least one of the usage policies of the user.

10. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of attaching an electronically signed usage policy to the data when the data is released.

11. A data transfer system comprising:
a service provider possessing a privacy policy; and
a broker hosting a usage policy for constraints related to data of a user, configured for checking a request from the service provider against the usage policy of the user and for deciding if data associated with the user can be released in response to the request.

12. A data transfer system comprising:
introducing means for introducing to a broker a usage policy for constraints related to data of a user;

receiving means for receiving a request for data associated with the user from a service provider to the broker;

checking means for checking, in the broker, the request against a usage policy of the user, and

deciding means for deciding if the data can be released.